

## **A Path to Holiness:**

### **Reclaiming Sunday as the Lord's Day with 52 Sundays**

**By Anita Houghton**, Associate Director of Engagement and Family Ministry  
Archdiocese of Detroit

By their witness as well as their words, families speak to others of Jesus. They pass on the faith, they arouse a desire for God and they reflect the beauty of the Gospel and its way of life.

*(Amoris Laetitia, 184)*

The Archdiocese of Detroit is in the midst of a missionary transformation under the leadership of its chief shepherd, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, and guided by his pastoral letter, [\*Unleash the Gospel\*](#). At the heart of these efforts to unleash the Gospel is the family. The Church summons Catholic families, in all their shapes and forms, to be stable, loving, and holy environments where Christ can be encountered. Like Pope Francis, Archbishop Vigneron recognizes the family as a vital cell for transforming the world and an important witness in our culture.

*Unleash the Gospel* calls families to display a strikingly counter-cultural way of living: grounded in prayer, sacraments, and Scripture. It calls families to embrace its role as the domestic Church and seek the spiritual and social renewal of its neighborhood, schools, and places of work. However, Archbishop Vigneron also recognizes that today's families are facing unprecedented challenges and need support and accompaniment to attain this vision. For this reason, the local Church in Detroit has committed a major portion of her resources to supporting families in building the domestic Church and equipping them for mission.<sup>i</sup>

A clear starting point for this work is to help families reclaim Sunday as a day set apart for the Lord. For many Catholic families in the United States, Mass attendance is rare, and Sundays are spent running errands and attending sports activities. Others are doing their best to raise their children in the faith but need tools to help them to build the domestic Church. To help all families reclaim the Lord's Day and grow in the habits of discipleship, the Archdiocese of Detroit created, *52 Sundays*, a resource that provides a structure for living Sunday in a distinctly Catholic way. For each Sunday of the calendar year, the book includes:

- The Sunday Gospel and citations for the other readings of the day
- A story of the life of a saint
- Questions for discussion
- A family activity to spend time together and have fun
- An easy recipe that provides an opportunity for families to cook together
- A prayer that teaches the habit of family prayer by exploring various forms of prayer throughout the year
- A liturgy link that explains an aspect of the Mass or the church environment
- A family challenge that encourages family members to put the Gospel into action
- A fun fact from Catholic or secular trivia for the given day or week

Here is just a sample of the feedback we have received from parents who use *52 Sundays*:

*“When Unleash the Gospel first came out, I honestly was intimidated by the idea of our family being a “witness” to our faith and a “domestic church.” 52 Sundays gives us concrete examples of how we can share our faith with our son and with others.” (Bethany Stawasz)*

*“With the help of 52 Sundays, we’ve gotten into a solid routine every Sunday of attending Mass together, having breakfast together as a family and talking about the readings and other material in 52 Sundays, and then doing some family activity that brings the Gospel ALIVE for our whole family. It allows us to give our Sunday over to God, in ways I would never have imagined for our family.” (Bethany Stawasz)*

*“Our family uses it every week and it’s so much fun! Craig & I have shared it with so many of our friends and fellow parishioners through our family ministry also. THANK YOU for this beautiful resource!” (Stephanie Rapp)*

*“In the midst of COVID, we are looking for creative ways to engage families in catechesis as our religious education classes are virtual. After purchasing 2 copies of 52 Sundays, we recognize what a valuable resource this could be for our religious education program!” (Susan Davidson)*

When the manuscript for *52 Sundays* was being prepared for its initial publication in 2020, we never anticipated its impact on families during the coronavirus pandemic. The closure of churches, schools, and businesses resulted in big changes in home life and family routines. Families began spending more time together and the domestic Church, by necessity, came alive! With countless families unable to attend Mass in person, parents brought “church” into their homes with *52 Sundays*.

*52 Sundays* is in its third year of publication and is finding its way into homes across the United States. This year’s edition has a vocations theme. Vocations to the priesthood, religious life, Holy Matrimony, and the lay state of single life are highlighted through the saint stories, activities, and discussion questions throughout the year. This provides parents opportunities to discuss vocations in a home setting and help their children discern God’s call on their life.

*52 Sundays* is a great way to engage families as we prepare for the World Meeting of Families in June. *52 Sundays* is available in English and Spanish and can be purchased from Liturgical Publications (LPI). Visit <https://4lpi.com/product/52-sundays-2022/> for purchase information. International shipping is available. Visit <https://www.52sundays.com/> to see a sample of the weekly content.

As we begin the New Year and look forward to the conclusion of the Year of the Family, the Archdiocese of Detroit will join the universal Church in celebrating the World Meeting of Families in June by engaging families in Southeast Michigan through prayer, catechesis, and parish celebrations. This celebration will complement the many efforts past and present to help families reclaim their Christian identity and form them for mission.

---

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, *Unleash the Gospel*, Guidepost 7.